

May 15, 1973

The Editor
The Washington Post
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Dear Sir:

The House vote refusing funds for the bombing of Cambodia; the threat by the Administration to violate such a directive even if confirmed by the Senate; and the public admission by Ambassador Godley that we have been paying for 15,000 to 20,000 Thai mercenary troops in Laos -- these three almost simultaneous events reveal more than a conflict between two branches of our Government. They outline an ominous pattern in which the Congress, and thereby the American people, are being purposefully challenged and belittled as part of long-range plan to subvert our Constitution.

In 1971, Congress enacted the Cooper-Church Amendment, forbidding the Administration to pay for any non-Lao troops in Laos. As stated by Senator Symington (Congressional Record, August 3, 1971) "this legislation, ... by letter as well as intent, was designed to prohibit any such practice." Since then, newspaper correspondents as well as Congressional investigators have reported our financing of the Thai troops. Why could it not be stopped? Because it was a C.I.A. operation? Yet, we now know that Congress can get facts straight from the C. I. A., for example, when this agency collaborates with the burglary squad of the White House.

If the bombing of Cambodia will now continue in opposition to formally expressed Congressional will, the challenge will be, not a test of Constitutional powers but an usurpation of power -- like those by which dictators overthrow democracies (often with C.I.A. support).

We cannot trust that the lessons of Watergate will sober the Nixon-Agnew team. A cornered, wounded animal is often desperate and thereby more reckless. Never in the history of Anglo-Saxon nations, since the revolution of 1688, has democracy been in such jeopardy. Will the Senate, the House, and the American people wake up in time?

Sincerely yours,

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S. E. Luria
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